

Comment Period on Statistical Change Opens

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Got a gripe about the federal government's decision to strip Long Island of its status as a metropolitan area separate from New York City?

The federal government is ready to listen.

Rep. Steve Israel (D-Huntington), said in an announcement Monday that the federal Office of Management and Budget is now prepared to receive faxes from Island residents who want to comment on the agency's controversial decision, which would lump the region in with the city for statistical purposes.

Long Island politicians and business leaders are upset about the proposal, saying the move will reduce federal aid to Nassau and Suffolk as the counties will have to compete with the city for dollars to provide housing and other programs. Island officials also say they are worried the region will lose its cultural identity as a result of the OMB change.

In response to the complaints, OMB agreed to reconsider its June 6 decision, and opened a comment period, which is to last until Sept. 30.

Israel said faxes can be sent to Katherine Wallman, chief statistician of the United States, at (202) 395-7245.

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